



**PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2018 6:30 P.M.
MUNICIPAL BUILDING I, ROOM 300
50 E. CIVIC CENTER DRIVE, GILBERT, ARIZONA 85296**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Presmyk, Chair (By phone)
Robert Ferron, Vice Chair
Barbara Guy
Gilbert Honeycutt
Jennifer Jones
Mark LaPorte
Edward Madrid
Matthew Roberts

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Christopher Wharton

COUNCIL LIAISON PRESENT:

Eddie Cook, Councilmember

STAFF PRESENT:

Robert Carmona, Parks and Recreation Director
John Kennedy, Parks and Recreation Manager
Rocky Brown, Parks and Recreation Business Manager
Linda Ayres, Admin. Support Supervisor
René Carlin, Recreation Supervisor
Stephanie McMullen, Recreation Coordinator
Charlotte Miller, Recreation Coordinator
Krista Neugebauer, Recreation Coordinator
JP LaCroix, Recreation Coordinator
Shawn Monson, Custodial Supervisor
Laura Young, Recreation Coordinator
Jennifer Lauria, Program Coordinator
Jennie Rambo, Naturalist

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Vice Chair Ferron called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.
- 2. ROLL CALL:** Linda Ayres called the roll and determined that a quorum was present.
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4. COMMUNICATION FROM CITIZENS PRESENT:** Members of the public may comment on matters within the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Board, but not on the agenda. The Board's response is limited to responding to criticism, asking staff to review a matter commented upon, or asking that a matter be put on a future agenda. There were no communications from citizens at this time.

CONSENT ITEMS

- 5. None.**

PRESENTATIONS

- 6. RECREATION CENTERS ANNUAL REPORT:** René Carlin, Recreation Supervisor, introduced team members Stephanie McMullen, (McQueen), Charlotte Miller (SERL), Kristen Neugebauer (Gilbert Community Center), JP LaCroix (Freestone), Shawn Monson, Custodian Supervisor, and Laura Young (Freestone). This team also serves as editors of the Recreation Guide, which comes out five times a year. The Recreation Division has a large number of recreation instructors, leaders, and support staff with up to 120 employees during the summer peak season.

Gilbert Community Center: Programming includes dance, arts and crafts, gymnastics, and music. The Community Center also houses the Senior Center. Next door is the new Heritage Center (former Page Park Center) which includes WIC and the CAP office, with a family resource center coming soon. There will be eight movies in the park this fall starting on September 28 with an expected 1,200 people. Vendors and sponsors were recently added as well as two food trucks. The Community Center offers room rentals. Adaptive Recreation classes include gymnastics, Zumba, bowling, cheer, arts and crafts, and field trips. The

Special Olympics holds tournaments for bowling and cheer. The cheer class is full and may add a second team. A video was shown of the Adaptive Recreation programs and tournaments.

Question: Bob Ferron asked if there are Adaptive Recreation programs for children. Krista noted that inclusion is provided with all classes, although there are no specific classes for younger children at this time. Bowling is for ages 8 and up. She explained that the schools are very supportive of adaptive recreation in their programming. Gilbert's Adaptive Rec programs tend to see more participants age 22 and up. This year gymnastics classes were added for a younger crowd ages 10 up to 19. Special Olympics start at age 8. Adaptive Recreation programs are listed in the Town's Recreation Guide.

Southeast Regional Library: SERL offers the largest room for rentals in the town. SERL is the largest library in the Maricopa County Library District with up to 75,000 people a month. East Valley Astronomy runs the observatory and we partner with them on the telescope check-out program. They have donated 3 telescopes and will be donating 4 more soon. Rentals include the assembly room (3,000 square feet) and conference rooms (700 square feet). Staff is working on wedding packages at the Riparian Preserve and the Library assembly room. Classes include dance, tumbling, and preschool-type classes. There is a rotating art exhibit and so far, 13 different artists have displayed their work. The Town partners with 35-40 independent contractors for specialty classes at 11 different facilities.

Custodial Crew: There are six members of the Custodial team for the 157,500 square feet of recreation facilities. The crew also takes care of light bulbs, ceiling fans, and the 42-foot rock wall at Freestone is inspected daily. The team has done flooring upgrades and maintenance, carpet installation in the Library office, and organization of the storage areas. Any minor repairs or maintenance items are taken care of and the team does an amazing job. The Custodial Crew is integrated as part of the recreation centers team.

McQueen Park Activity Center: This center is located next to Playa Del Rey Elementary School, and includes a game area, toddler room, classrooms, and family-oriented gymnasium. Programs include storytime adventure, crafts, and an after-school Fun Zone program. Wiggle Worms is a weekly program for kids 5 and under and their parents. Several moms' groups have shared the Wiggle Worms program on social media, and word of mouth referrals have increased revenue 56% over the last fiscal year. Events include Monster Mash and Earth Day. The gymnasium is programmed with volleyball, basketball, and badminton. The gymnasium usage and revenue have increased 80% from the last fiscal year. The gymnasium is rented for weddings, HOAs, and birthday parties. Those rentals are up 12.9% from the previous year. There is more exposure through advertising on Eventective, an online resource for referrals. A variety of classes are offered for preschool age through adult and include kids cooking and gymnastics. The McQueen Center offers the most programming space of all the town's recreation centers. Classes have increased by 37%.

Freestone Recreation Center: This center is open 7 days a week, 361 days a year, and offers two fitness centers, an indoor walking track, large gymnasium, 42-foot rock wall, lobby games, and a Kiddie Corner. Summer is very busy with the Kids Camp program. This year, a total of 1,349 kids registered over the three sessions, and the 11 camp leaders keep the kids engaged and moving. During the summer, there is a program where businesses can purchase space to display and promote their business, which helps to generate revenue for the Center as well. The business program was sold out for all 10 weeks this past summer. One chiropractor has had so much success through this program, they have come back for the last five summers.

There are quite a few pop-up gyms within a 5-mile radius and staff has been tasked to find how Freestone is unique in order to promote memberships. There is a special level of quality service from all staff and instructors to make everyone feel welcome and at home as part of the Freestone Family. The classes and programs are not just for ages 18-40, but include senior and youth programs. Other facilities do not have all-ages programming. Staff makes an effort to truly get to know the members. This type of specialized customer service also helps with membership retention. There are two personal trainers available who are independent contractors, although they are part of the family as well. There is constant feedback on how clean the facility is, thanks to the awesome custodial crew. This past fiscal year, over 41,000 people participated in group

exercise classes, which are included with the membership fee or day use fee. Two full-time staff members oversee this 50,000 square-foot facility.

Facility Improvements:

Freestone had some aesthetic improvements, cutting edge equipment upgrades, and additional tables and chairs in the lobby. Positive word art and inspirational messaging appear throughout the facility.

McQueen was built in 1997 and has received a facelift and upgrades with new cabinets and countertops.

Southeast Regional Library opened in 1999 and was quite dated. It has received new carpet and exterior paint.

Social Media: The Facebook page now has 10,800 followers; Instagram has 1,880 followers; and Twitter has 1,986 followers. Certain events and programs are posted to increase exposure. A recent post about the movie in the park event reached 140,000 people. There is a poll on Facebook for the October 5 movie in the park.

Highlights:

- 1,247,566 guests visited Gilbert recreation facilities in FY18. Over the past two years, there was an increase of over 100,000 people.
- 12,376 participants registered in 1,230 classes, an increase of 474 from FY17. The model has changed to offer less classes to drive more demand. This strategy is working well.
- Rental revenue was \$198,179 in FY18, an increase of almost \$65,000 from last year.
- Recreation Center revenue increased by \$141,313 or 7.7%.
- The Recreation Program Guides have been converted from Microsoft Publisher to Adobe InDesign.
- For the second year, Freestone has exceeded one million in revenue with \$1.13 million, an increase of over \$52,000 from FY17.
- Employees Mark Hunyady and Barb O'Fallon saved the life of a patron on October 30, 2017. That patron is still actively involved in the recreation center. Safety and service are the number one priorities.

The Road Ahead: Staffing transitions will take place as three of the buildings only have one full-time person. Charlotte will move over to McQueen Park Activity Center, and Jennifer Lauria will move over to the Southeast Regional Library to oversee activities at both the Library and the Riparian Preserve. The Freestone multi-purpose room optimization will include the addition of a traverse wall, repurposed from the McQueen overhaul. This will be a great addition for the tween age group. Wedding packages will be offered at McQueen Park Activity Center, the Community Center, and the Southeast Regional Library. Corporate team building and enhanced birthday packages will be offered at Freestone Recreation Center.

Board Comments:

Vice Chair Ferron appreciated the great presentation, especially the year-to-year comparison. He frequently attends the Town's recreation facilities in his role as a Sports Coalition member and stated that the staff is wonderful.

- 7. RECREATION DIVISION ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT:** John Kennedy provided the FY18 Annual Report on the Recreation Division, which includes Special Events, Aquatics, Youth and Adult Sports, Recreation Centers and programming. Information is tracked and used to gauge performance. John reviewed all of the team members for each division and support staff.

FY18 Recreation Division Results (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018)

Revenue \$2.92 million, up by \$136,000 over FY17 or 5%

Expenses \$4.77 million, up by \$50,000 or 1% from FY17 (Includes \$250,000 in one-time expenses).

Subsidy \$1.85 million, reduced by \$86,000 or 4%.

Program Areas:

Special Events – Revenue was down by \$29,000 or 11%. We lost a title sponsor to one event, and the Gilbert 5K is on a downward trend in participation. This year we will do a glow run to increase interest. Expenses went up by \$70,000 or 12%. The Water Tower lighting was a \$70,000 investment, and there were legal fees of \$45,000 due to a private promoter-run event. The actual operating expenses were down by \$45,000, excluding those special expenses.

Aquatics – A trend of negative revenue was reversed, going up 6% or \$26,000. Expenses were down by \$56,000 or 7%. The previous three years we were catching up on deferred maintenance projects.

Sports - Revenue was down by \$12,000 or 3%. Participation numbers were down. Expenses went down by \$10,000 or 3%.

Centers and Programming (including Riparian Preserve) – Revenue increased by \$151,000 or 9%. Expenses were up by \$47,000 or 2%, including \$200,000 in improvements at the Library.

Optimization – Efforts began in FY2015 to maximize revenue, create efficiencies, increase participation, and improve the bottom line. Since 2015, revenues have gone up almost \$500,000, expenses have gone up \$170,000, and the net subsidy was reduced almost \$300,000.

Next Steps - Continue optimization with Adult and Youth Sports, expand sponsorship programs, track results and adjust accordingly.

Board Comments:

Vice Chair Ferron was impressed with the great tracking. The subsidy changes are positive for everyone.

Chair Presmyk appreciated the great report and noted the importance of keeping the Splash Pad running under the Water Tower.

- 8. RESERVATION/RENTAL ANNUAL REPORT:** Linda Ayres is the Administrative Assistant Supervisor overseeing the front office staff. The Reservation and Rental team members were reviewed. Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted monthly with outstanding feedback. Services include:

Reservations – Ramadas, fields, sport courts, Recreation Center rentals, pools, and campsites.

Permits – Block parties, Riparian Preserve field trips, Scout tours, Gilbert Road banner, film & photography permits, and alcohol permits.

Department Support – Program registration and questions; concession and vending payments; Certificates of Insurance; records and retention; accounts payable; and special event support. The team handles over 10,000 incoming calls and conducts about the same in outgoing calls.

Accomplishments:

- Online Reservation Requests through Activenet.
- Online Ramada reservations began in January 2018.
- Customer Satisfaction – Received 94% Excellent customer satisfaction rating.
- WIG – Created an Operations Manual in OneNote.
- Rental Revenue was up \$16,000 for sport fields (including Coalition rentals).
- Park Rentals – 13,695 permit bookings
- 979 Internet Transactions (Online Reservations)
- 400 Internet Ramada Rentals

FY18 Rental Revenue: \$451,982, an increase of \$19,000 over FY17

FY19 Goals:

Improve online reservation process with a map.

All staff will complete the EDGE Academy; identify a process to map for efficiencies.

Maintain 95% average on Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Cross-train staff in accounts payable.

Board Questions:

Barbara Guy asked if racquetball courts can be reserved online. Linda believed it was do-able and will check with Freestone Recreation Center. Staff has been very innovative in fine-tuning the system to add custom questions about the age of participants, sports, etc. This has made the reservation process much more efficient.

Vice Chair Ferron felt the map for the online reservations will be a huge upgrade.

AGENDA ITEMS

9. TORTOISE HABITAT UPDATE: Jennifer Lauria reviewed the Department plan to address various items from Scout Troop 683's plan for a Tortoise Habitat.

- Habitat Location – Visible area at SERL, proximity to existing irrigation lines, area sustainable for future.
- Timeline for Construction – 3 to 4 months total, after securing donations, volunteers, etc.
- Project Management - Department to take lead and Parks staff will approve each phase.
- Tortoise Care – 6-12 month trial period as an occupied habitat. If there are issues, the habitat may become an observation garden with programming to include a tortoise.
- Security – Library video surveillance and signage to deter theft, injury, and vandalism.
- Illness/Injury – A Veterinarian on the Foundation Board offered services, if needed.
- Feeding & Monitoring – Supplemental food through a team effort with a feeding schedule. The public can serve as monitors and staff will check on the process.
- Staff Involved – Feeding, monitoring, weeding, replanting, and repairs. Estimated 1-2 hours per week.
- Community Involvement – Parks and Recreation Foundation will support needs of the habitat.
- Adopt-a-Habitat Program - Community group, school, or church can assist in the maintenance.
- Programming – Naturalist-led tortoise care and demonstrations; Park Ranger demonstrations; invite Arizona Game & Fish or Phoenix Herpetological Society to host educational sessions.
- Budget: Veterinarian \$500; Supplemental food \$300; Plants & materials \$300. Total \$1,100 per year.

MOTION: Les Presmyk moved to approve proceeding with the Eagle Scout project of building a Tortoise Habitat; seconded by Gil Honeycutt. Motion passed 7-0.

10. NEW PARK UPDATES: Robert Carmona was amazed at how the Parks staff has utilized resources successfully. During the first two weeks of October, contractors will arrive at both Gilbert Regional and Desert Sky Parks. All of the permits are being finalized and the guaranteed price for the early phases will go before Council at their next meeting. Once we reach 100% design, there will be a presentation to the Parks Board.

Elliott District Park is on track and construction is going well. Staff has been obtaining quotes for the deferred maintenance items and are staying on budget. Those contracts will go before Council on October 20. Opening is slated for February, 2019.

Rocky Brown reported on an RFP for restaurant facilities and concessions. A company was selected to proceed and negotiations went well. An agreement is being drafted and will go to Council in October. The Town is working with Fisher Marketing for a new brand for the facility with a new name and fresh color palette. Fisher is big in professional sports and has worked with the Diamondbacks, Coyotes, and the recent Suns rebranding. Rocky will keep the Board updated.

Robert stated the high-level concessionaires will take the facility to a new level. Staff is working with a major league baseball team in terms of sponsorship for one of the fields at Elliott District Park. That contract will also go to Council in October. Interest levels are high and there are a lot of rental requests. This facility will be able to provide multiple avenues of recreation for the community and will be much more than a tournament facility. It will serve as a large recreation center as well as a major tourist attraction for hosting

state, regional, and national tournaments. He hopes to have some new logos and colors to show the Board at the next meeting.

Board Questions:

Vice Chair Ferron asked when reservations can be taken for tournaments? John Kennedy advised that staff has reached out to private promoters and are currently taking requests for weekends. Once the full-time Recreation Supervisor is in place, staff will be reaching out to start programming the rest of the calendar. The private promoter events need more lead time for scheduling.

Robert Carmona stated the private promoter weekend events range from 48 to 60 teams a weekend coming into Gilbert. The new Recreation Supervisor will start September 24 for that facility.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

11. MINUTES - Consider Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 14, 2018:

MOTION: Barbara Guy moved to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2018 meeting; seconded by Mark LaPorte. The Motion passed 6-0, with Les Presmyk abstaining as he was not in attendance at that meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

12. REPORT FROM CHAIR: Chair Presmyk thanked Vice Chair Ferron for filling in during his absence.

13. REPORT FROM BOARD MEMBERS: None.

14. REPORT FROM FOUNDATION LIAISON: Linda Ayres reminded the Board about the Foundation Luau coming up October 20, 6-9 p.m. Sponsorship opportunities are available through Jennifer Lauria.

15. REPORT FROM COUNCIL LIAISON: Councilmember Cook announced that Robert Carmona was selected as Parks and Recreation Director, after an executive search process.

16. REPORT FROM STAFF LIAISONS: Linda Ayres provided a copy of the monthly report to Council as well as 311 information cards and Z-cards on Gilbert Parks and Trail Maps.

Robert Carmona noted that there is a lot going on in the Parks Department and he encouraged input and feedback from the Park Board.

17. UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Movies in the Park, Gilbert Community Center, 6:30 pm – 9/28, 10/5, 10/19
- Downtown Concerts, Water Tower Plaza, 6:30 pm – 10/11, 10/25

CONCLUSION

18. MOTION TO ADJOURN: Barbara Guy moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mark LaPorte. Motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

ATTEST:

Robert Ferron, Vice Chair

Denise Merdon, Staff Liaison